DAWN

METRO South

KARACHI Sunday, January 18, 2026

KARACHI

Sunset	**06:06** pm
Sunrise (Tomorrow)	**07:17** am

NEXT 24 HRS

Minimum	**13°C**
Maximum	**26°C**
Humidity	**65%**
Outlook	**Sunny**

United hurt City title hopes as Spurs flop again

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Three dead in Gul Plaza blaze

KARACHI: At least three persons were killed and seven others injured in a huge fire that erupted in Gul Plaza shopping mall located on main M.A. Jinnah Road on Saturday night, rescue officials said.

Rescue-1122 spokesperson Hassaan Ul Haseeb Khan told *Dawn* that the fire erupted in the shops located on the ground floor.

DIG-South Syed Asad Raza said that three men died of suffocation.

He said there were people stuck on the upper floors of the building. He said six fire tenders were busy controlling the fire.

Footage showed firemen rescuing people trapped on the upper floors through a snorkel.

The fire-fighting operation was underway till late in the night.—By Imtiaz Ali

A MASSIVE fire has engulfed shops in Gul Plaza on M.A. Jinnah Road, sending flames and thick smoke into the sky. —Fahim Siddiqi / White Star

21 Burns Road eateries sealed for occupying footpaths

By Tahir Siddiqui

KARACHI: As many as 21 eateries on the famous Burns Road Food Street have been sealed by authorities for occupying footpaths and walkways.

District South Deputy Commissioner Javed Nabi Khoso said that the restaurants and other food shops had been sealed because they had placed their furniture on the walkways.

He said that the sealed outlets would be unsealed after payment of fines and undertaking by the restaurant owners to fully comply with the standard operating procedures (SOPs).

Mr Nabi said that the commissioner had directed all deputy commissioners to take strict action against the "soft encroachments" that hindered the vehicular and pedestrian movement in any part of the city.

He said that most of the shops and eateries were sealed in Arambagh subdivision where Burns Road Food Street was also located.

The DC said that all shopkeepers would have to pay fines and submit written assurances of compliance with the SOPs.

He said that some of the restaurants and shops sealed two days ago would be allowed to re-open their outlets as they had already paid fines and submitted required affidavits.

Meanwhile, the anti-encroachment operation also continued in other parts of the city.

Korangi DC Masood Bhutto said that two restaurants were sealed in in Model Colony and five others in Korangi and other parts of the district.

It may be noted that the city authorities have launched a massive operation against encroachments on footpaths and walkways across the city, sealing several markets, including the largest motorcycles market at Akbar Road, Saddar.

103 people in Sindh lose battle against mosquito-borne diseases in 2025

• Contrary to official figures of 33 deaths from dengue and malaria, data from four major hospitals in Karachi and Hyderabad paint a much grimmer picture • 83 deaths occurred at hospitals in Karachi • Prompt diagnosis and treatment are recommended to prevent complications and mortality

By Faiza Ilyas

KARACHI: As many as 103 people died from mosquito-borne diseases across Sindh during 2025, with 23 of them losing their lives at a Karachi hospital due to malaria, according to data gathered from three hospitals in Karachi and one in Hyderabad.

However, the figure contradicts the provincial health department's tally, which puts the death toll from dengue and malaria at 33.

Statistics gathered from the four hospitals — Indus Hospital, Aga Khan University Hospital (AKUH), Sindh Infectious Diseases Hospital & Research Centre (SIDH&RC) and Liaquat University Hospital, Hyderabad/Jamshoro (LUH) — revealed that at least 103 people lost their lives to mosquito-borne infections, including malaria. The data showed that 83 of them, including children, reported at hospitals in Karachi.

A significant number of these cases were reported from August to November last year.

The Indus Hospital saw a total of 8,883 dengue cases in 2025 with 40 deaths. Sources told *Dawn* that 18 of the patients who were brought in critical condition died at the hospital's emergency department.

In addition, a total of 2,719 malaria patients also reported at the facility, which saw 23 deaths from the parasitic disease. Six of these patients died at the hospital's emergency department.

The SIDH&RC saw a total of 941 cases of mosquito-borne illnesses; dengue 651 and malaria 290. The hospital had 14 deaths from dengue fever but no death from malaria.

While comprehensive data couldn't be gathered from the AKUH, sources said that at least six patients died of dengue between Jan and October last year.

Sources at the LUH disclosed that 25 patients died of dengue fever at the hospital last year, most of whom were admitted between Sept and Nov.

However, according to the official data, a total of 20,502 dengue fever cases were reported in the province with 33 deaths; over 90 per cent of these cases were reported in Karachi (10,375 cases with 10 deaths) and Hyderabad (9,559 cases with 23 deaths).

It also showed that a total of 283,140 malaria cases were reported in the province with no death.

The most affected division was Hyderabad 128,571 followed by Larkana (69,543) Shaheed Benazirabad 31,685, Mirpurkhas 25,671, Sukkur 24,114 and Karachi (3,556).

Health dept's response

The health department spokesperson didn't respond to messages seeking clarification on the large disparity existing between the official figures and the data directly collected from the four hospitals.

Unaccounted deaths

Sources at these hospitals also said that while the government lacked a system to transparently collect data, at least from hospitals and labs operating in the province, a large number of patients reported to general physicians running small clinics and many of them died at

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Forensic evidence links suspected child rapist to over 100 sexual assault cases

Investigators say DNA of held suspect matches in seven cases; police claim man raped 100 boys between 2020 and 2025

By Imtiaz Ali

KARACHI: Based on forensic evidence including DNA profiling, a man held three days ago was found to be involved in the rape of over 100 boys in the city over a period of more than five years, police said on Saturday.

City police chief Azad Khan said that two suspects were arrested by Surjani police three days ago when they were allegedly taking a minor boy on a motorbike with the intention to sexually assault him.

"They were handed over to Tipu Sultan police. When SP Investigation Usman Sadozai went through the case, he found similarities with previous cases," he said, adding, "He brought victims from old cases, who identified one of the suspects physically".

He said that the motorbike recovered from the suspect was matched with CCTV footage from previous cases.

"Later, he also confessed to almost a dozen [rape] cases. DNA [sample] has been sent today [Saturday] and the result is awaited," the police chief said.

The city police chief said that there was no evidence so far that the suspects filmed any rape incident. "In investigation so far no case of rape with murder has come to fore. However, upon resistance one victim boy was injured," he said.

Describing him as a serial rapist, SSP Sadozai told *Dawn* that the suspect is a resident of Manzoor Colony and a mechanic by profession. He maintained that the investigations were still underway.

He said recently the police received a laboratory report about seven sodomy cases involving boys that took place between 2020 and 2025. The medical report confirmed that the same person was involved in these cases as his DNA had been matched.

Subsequently, Mr Khan established a task force comprising all investigation officers (IOs) and SSPs (Investigation) of the metropolis to work on it.

"The story of all sodomy cases was the same," said the senior officer.

He said the suspect used to kidnap a child aged between 10 and 14 from different parts of the metropolis between 6pm and midnight.

He would take the victim on a motorbike and subject him to sexual assault along the Malir river bank. Subsequently, he would drop the survivor at the same place from where he had picked him up.

He said that besides the DNA-matching cases, three victims had also identified him as the alleged rapist.

He added that in another case, a boy identified both suspects who had carried him to Surjani Town on a motorcycle for nefarious activity, but they dropped him when he raised a hue and cry.

Meanwhile, Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah vowed that he would not tolerate child abuse cases.

While appreciating the police for the arrest of the suspect involved in the rape of over 100 children, he termed it a breakthrough.

It may be recalled that the city police chief has set up an investigation team under the supervision of Crime Investigation Agency (CIA) DIG Muquddus Haider for the investigation of sodomy cases, which appear to have been committed by the same accused according to DNA analysis on January 6, 2026.

Other members of the team included SSP Investigation Malir, SSP AVCC, SSP Investigation Korangi, SSP Investigation East and SSP Investigation South.

The seven sodomy cases had taken place in Sharafi Goth, Zaman Town, Korangi Industrial Area, Mehmoodabad and three in Defence.

The team was directed to ensure concrete efforts are made to identify and arrest the accused involved in these incidents and to complete the investigation in all aspects with cogent evidence.

The probing team may co-opt any officer from the Karachi range to assist in the investigation, as per the city police chief's order. The team was asked to submit a progress report on a day-to-day basis.

Dumper runs over, kills biker, injures wife

By Our Staff Reporter

KARACHI: A man was killed and his wife critically injured when a recklessly driven dumper truck hit their motorcycle on the National Highway on Saturday, police said.

A traffic police official said that the driver of the heavy vehicle (KC-980) was coming from the wrong side when he hit the motorcycle near Zulfiqarabad.

The couple on the bike sustained critical injuries and were taken to the Jinnah Postgraduate Medical Centre, where doctors pronounced Nisar Ahmed, 60, dead on arrival. His wife, Razia, 45, was admitted for treatment.

The dumper driver escaped from the spot. The heavy vehicle was impounded by the Steel Town police.

The Colour of My Heart premiered

Documentary on legendary artist Zia Mohyeddin set to hit screens on 30th

By Peerzada Salman

KARACHI: A documentary titled *The Colour of My Heart — Rung Hai Dil Ka Mere* directed by Umar Riaz premiered at a local multiplex on Saturday evening. The film focuses on the life and work of the internationally renowned artist and the founder of the National Academy of Performing Arts (Napa), the late Zia Mohyeddin.

Talking to *Dawn*, Mr Riaz said, "This is a film 15 years in the making. We took the first shots in December 2010. It is about Zia Mohyeddin reciting poetry and it's shot in a poetic style. The idea is not just [to] present that Zia sahib was born in so and so year, he did this and that, but to delve into how his mind and heart worked, and how he executed his craft."

He said the documentary is partially a biographical account but there's a lot more to it. Answering the question about Zia sahib being a difficult man, he said, "Yes, that's why the film took 15 years to make and to convince him. I think he saw that I was very passionate about telling not just his story, but that amazing generation including [poet] Faiz Ahmed Faiz. The film is built around his reading of Faiz."

On the subject of his target audience, the young filmmaker, who is the son of Zia sahib's nephew, Naveed Riaz, said, "The late Arfa Syeda Zehra is the narrator of the film and she said it perfectly, 'anyone who is trying to find meaning in life.'"

The Colour of My Heart begins with, as Riaz said, Ms Zehra's voice who talks about the importance of love and what love entails. Soon, shots of Zia sahib grace the screen, along with inter-cuts of his interviews and bits of his performances or a touch prior to them. At the heart of it all is a show that he used to do in Lahore on Dec 31 every year at which he read pieces of Urdu prose and *nazm*s.

There are several scenes in the film that tug at the viewer's heartstrings. The director thoughtfully captures the sociopolitical milieu of Pakistan in which Zia sahib is asked to set up an academy in Karachi. He also goes back and forth in time in the film when the late artist first went abroad (to Australia) in the early 1950s and then to the Royal Academy of Dramatic Arts (RADA). It was in England, and watching the likes of John Gielgud, that Zia sahib realised the importance of language, and this is where his love for Urdu blossomed.

There's no dearth of poignant moments in the documentary which makes the film an essential watch. Zia sahib talks about being a loner. His wives are also interviewed to give their opinions on his idiosyncrasies. Then when Faiz Ahmed Faiz comes into the audio-visual equation, Mr Riaz shows his sensitive directorial side by letting the poet's daughters speak about him like only daughters can — he keeps the camera close on their faces when they mention his death. It was a moving sequence.

The documentary will have its countrywide release on Jan 30.